



Tidings

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Following Christ, We Connect a Diversity of People with each other and with God!

Some Easter Traditions

How is the date of Easter determined?

Easter is celebrated on the Sunday following the first full moon, the *Paschal* full moon, after the vernal equinox. Since the date of the vernal equinox changed from year to year, calculating the proper date can be difficult. This is still the method used to determine Easter today, which is why some years we have Easter earlier than other years. This year Easter falls on Sunday, April 4.

Connection to Passover

The day before his crucifixion, Jesus observed Passover with his disciples. Passover is the time that Jewish people remembered their freedom and exodus from Egypt. During this Passover feast, Jesus told his disciples that the bread symbolizes his body that would be broken and the wine, his blood, which would be poured out for the forgiveness of sins. The Last Supper is remembered today through the act of taking Communion and sharing bread and wine to remember the sacrifice of Jesus.

Christian and Pagan Traditions

There are many traditions that surround the entire Lent season. Traditions across the globe include the Easter bunny, colored eggs, gift baskets, and flowers.

The Easter bunny

What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of Easter? As a Christian, the first image might be the cross or the empty tomb. For the general public, a blitz of media images and merchandise on store shelves makes it more likely that the Easter Bunny comes to mind. So how did a rabbit distributing eggs become a part of Easter?

There are several reasons for the rabbit, or hare, to be associated with Easter, all of which come through pagan celebrations or beliefs. The most obvious is the hare's fertility. Easter comes during spring and celebrates new life. The Christian meaning of new life through Christ and a general emphasis on new life are different, but the two gradually merged. Any animals – like the hare – that produced many offspring were easy to include.

The hare is also an ancient symbol for the moon. The date of Easter depends on the moon. This may have helped the hare to be absorbed into Easter

celebrations. The hare or rabbit's burrow helped the animal's adoption as part of Easter celebrations. Believers saw the rabbit coming out of its underground home as a symbol for Jesus coming out of the tomb. Perhaps this was another case of taking a pre-existing symbol and giving it a Christian meaning.

The Easter hare came to America with German immigrants, and the hare's role passed to the common American rabbit. Originally children made nests for the rabbit in hats, bonnets, or fancy paper boxes, rather than the baskets of today. Once the children finished their nests, they put them in a secluded spot to keep from frightening the shy rabbit. The appealing nests full of colored eggs probably helped the customs to spread.

Back in Southern Germany, the first pastry and candy Easter bunnies became popular at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This custom also crossed the Atlantic, and children still eat candy rabbits – particularly chocolate ones – at Easter.

Easter Eggs

Next to the Easter bunny, the most familiar symbol is the Easter egg. The egg has a long pre-Christian history. Many Ancient cultures viewed eggs as a symbol of life. Hindus, Egyptians, Persians, and Phoenicians believed the world begun with an enormous egg. The Persians, Greeks, and Chinese gave gifts of eggs during spring festivals in celebration of new life all around them. Other sources say people ate dyed eggs at spring festivals in Egypt, Persia, Greece, and Rome. In ancient Druid lore, the eggs of serpents were sacred and stood for life. Early Christians looked at the connection eggs had to life and decided eggs could be a part of their celebration of Christ's resurrection. In addition, in some areas, eggs were forbidden during Lent; therefore, they were a delicacy at Easter. Since many of the earlier customs were Eastern in origin, some speculate that early missionaries or knights of the Crusade may have been responsible for bringing the tradition to the West.

In the 4th century, people presented eggs in church to be blessed and sprinkled with holy water. By the 12th century, the *Benedictio Ovorum* had been introduced authorizing the special use of eggs on the holy days of Easter. The timing of this blessing would uphold the idea that Crusaders may have brought the tradition back. Even though eggs had been used previously, the Crusaders may have made the custom more widespread. Once the custom became accepted, new traditions began to grow up around it. Eggs were dyed red for joy and in memory of Christ's blood. Egg rolling contests came to America from England, possibly as a reminder of the stone being rolled away.

What about the familiar Easter Egg hunt? One source suggested that it grew out of the tradition of German children searching for hidden pretzels during the Easter season. Since children were hiding nests for the Easter Bunny to fill with eggs at the same time they were hunting pretzels, it was only a small leap to begin hiding eggs instead.

Sunrise Services

The familiar sunrise service is a relatively new addition to Easter. A group of young Moravian men in Hernhut, Saxony held the first recorded sunrise service in 1732. They went to their cemetery called God's Acre at sunrise to worship in memory of the women who went to the tomb early on the first Easter morning and discovered it empty. Moravian immigrants brought the custom to America, with the first service in the United States held in 1743.

Easter Lilies

The Easter lily is another new addition to Easter celebrations. Throughout the years, painters and sculptors used the white Madonna lily to symbolize purity and innocence, frequently referring to Mary. This lily doesn't force well, so nurseries couldn't get the flower to bloom in time for Easter. In the 1880s, Mrs. Thomas Sargent brought Bermuda lily bulbs back to Philadelphia. A local nurseryman, William Harris, saw the lilies and introduced them to the trade. They were easy to force into bloom in time for the Easter season. From there, the Bermuda lily, now the familiar Easter lily, spread throughout the country.

Easter is the most significant event in the Christian religion. May God bless you this Easter and always!

With love,

Rev Co.

Source: <https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/spiritual-life/undertanding-the-history-and-symbols-of-easter-1256039.html>

Worship Ministry

April 4

Communion/Easter Sunday

Service of Worship	9:00a – www.fccdp.org
Virtual Coffee Hour	9:50a – 11:00a www.fccdp.org
Lay Reader	Marcia Urban
Scripture Reading	Mark 16:1-8

April 11

Service of Worship	9:00a – www.fccdp.org
Virtual Coffee Hour	9:50a – 11:00a www.fccdp.org
Lay Reader	Ralph Murdy
Scripture Reading	John 20:19-31

April 18

Service of Worship	9:00a – www.fccdp.org
Virtual Coffee Hour	9:50a – 11:00a www.fccdp.org
Lay Reader	Wendy Wallace
Scripture Reading	Luke 24:36b-48

April 25

Service of Worship	9:00a - www.fccdp.org
Virtual Coffee Hour	9:50a – 11:00a www.fccdp.org
Lay Reader	Communicants
Scripture Reading	John 10:11-18



In observance of Pi Day on Sunday, March 14, Rev. Co wore a themed shirt and delivered the message, "Irrational Love," relating that Pi is an irrational number. He also incorporated the day's scripture reading, John 3:14-21, in his message.

Children's & Adult Education Ministry

Thank You!

Sue Almerigi, CAE coordinator, reports that the Sunday School collected enough quarters (coin folder project) from the congregation during last year's and this year's Lenten season, to purchase the following through the Heifer Project: \$750 – water for life; \$120 – one goat; \$50 – Basket of Hope. The Sunday School students would like any leftover funds to be used to purchase a cow. Heifer International is a global nonprofit working to eradicate poverty and hunger through sustainable, values-based holistic community development. For more information, speak with Sue.

Membership & Communications Ministry

Staying Connected – Can You Help?

Our Membership and Communications Ministry is in the process of creating a group entitled "*Contact and Care.*" During the Covid-19 pandemic, the challenge to stay in constant contact and to care for one another as a congregation has grown exponentially. We also realize the need for such an instrument as part of our congregation's plan in case of a disaster, whether it is natural, technological, chemical, civil unrest, etc.

Goal: We are looking for people that will act as a Contact Leader and who are willing to keep in contact with other people.

Responsibility: Gather four people to stay in regular "Contact and Care."

Frequency: Make contact at least once a week.

Medium: This would be up to the leader and the people who are part of that group and could be in any form he/she chooses; for example, via phone, email, texting, satellite call, etc.

If this is something you are interested in helping with, please contact Michelle Herrera at: sales@apg2020.com.

Evening Circle Bake/Craft Sale, Pizza Coupon Sale a Success!

The women of Evening Circle want to thank everyone for your great support of our "virtual" March Bake & Craft Sale and purchase of Lou Malnati's pizza coupons. The Bake & Craft sale made \$960.50. The pizza coupon sale netted a profit of \$675. FCC's general fund and several local charities will benefit. Thanks again!

Several women of Evening Circle assembled over 50 gifts that were delivered/mailed to members and friends of FCC before Easter. Several Palm crosses also were distributed at church on Palm Sunday, and extra Easter candy bundles will be distributed at church on Easter Sunday. Thank you from Evening Circle and Diaconate for all your support.

The next Zoom meeting of Evening Circle will be on Tuesday, April 13 at 7:00pm. The link will be in a 'Notes from Co' and also sent out via email to all our members. Everyone is welcome to join in.



Evening Circle members (l to r) Michelle Herrera and Pam Lorvig assemble Easter care packages for various church members and friends. Others who contributed to this effort include Flo Hoffman, Sandy Flink, Joanne Kimball, Nancy Brink and John Foster.

Property Ministry

Memorial Garden Brick Order Form

This is an order form to purchase engraved bricks for our Memorial Garden. Orders must be received by **June 30, 2022**. Bricks can be in memory of loved ones, or to commemorate special occasions such as weddings, birthdates, anniversaries, confirmations or graduations.



This order is for:

___ 4" x 8" Bricks, 3 lines – 13 characters per line (incl. spaces) @ \$80.00 per brick.

___ 8" x 8" Bricks, 6 lines – 13 characters per line (incl. spaces) @ \$175.00 per brick.

(You do not need to use all lines on your brick. The engraving company reserves the right to edit text.)

4" x 8" Brick:

Line 1 _____
Line 2 _____
Line 3 _____

8" x 8" Brick:

Line 1 _____
Line 2 _____
Line 3 _____
Line 4 _____
Line 5 _____
Line 6 _____

Please make checks payable to First Congregational Church, Memorial Garden.

Name _____ Phone _____

Email Address _____

Finance Committee

Financial Report

For the month of February, FCCDP had income of \$16,979 and expenses of \$24,142. This is a shortfall for the month of \$7,142. However, due to the Payroll Protection Loan funding that we received, we are still in a positive position of \$18,097 through the first nine months of the fiscal year. A special **Thank You** to all of our church members and friends for keeping up-to-date with their pledges and offerings - and in many cases, even making additional donations whenever possible.

Automate Your Giving With ACH

Since many of our church members are still not able to return to in-person worship, we want to remind you of an easy way to keep up-to-date with your pledges and offerings. You can schedule your regular offering to be paid via electronic transfer from your bank checking or savings account, on a monthly, bi-monthly, or weekly basis. It's easy! Just contact Jana Haas, at jhaas@fccdp.org, for more information or to get started.

Budget Requests Due From Ministries

All Church Ministries are reminded that budget requests for the coming fiscal year are due by April 18. If you have not yet done so, please email your request to surry1024@comcast.net to assure that funding for your ministry is included in the budgeting process.

Happy Birthday to You!!

Congratulations to the following church members/friends on their birthdays!!

Anna Lodewyck	02 -Apr	Jenna Cooper	16-Apr
Sharon Urry	02-Apr	Rick Johnson	18-Apr
Jason Schacht	04-Apr	Mai Luu	22-Apr
Bill Meincke	06-Apr	Larry Meyer	23-Apr
Michele Weber	07-Apr	Don Cameron	26-Apr
Quinn Yost	07-Apr	Zaphillia Yost	26-Apr
Alex Liston	08-Apr	Nicole Budnik	28-Apr
John Priester	08-Apr		
Brian Cameron	09-Apr		

Gifts & Memorials

In Loving Memory of Dick Wilson from Flo Hoffman

In Loving Memory of Dick Wilson from Jim & Adrienne Gamboa

In Loving Memory of Dick Wilson from Hans & Inge Eschenbach

In Honor Of Bob & Barb McCullough from Robbin Muhr for Adult
Missions

From the Community



A big “thanks” to all who supported our Scout Troop 6 spaghetti dinner fundraiser in March. A total of 215 meals were served at the drive-through event, the split-the-pot winner was awarded \$430 and more than \$1,000 was raised.



From our Historian, Nancy Meyer

Someone mentioned to me recently that since we weren't having services in the sanctuary and no choir, our choir director and accompanist have had a much easier year. My reaction? You've got to be kidding!! Doing everything virtually has been quite a challenge and very time consuming! I decided this "recent" history at FCCDP needed to be shared on how it was accomplished to have the choir participate in our "virtual" services. I asked our choir director, Scott Emerick, to share with me what it has taken to hear and eventually see our Chancel Choir singing. I wish I could share the entire narrative with you as it is fascinating, but had to do some major editing. Here's the end result:

Who would have ever thought that we would enter a time where every part of our lives would change so quickly? During our regular routine to prepare music for Sunday services, Anna and I would receive the scriptures for each service to give us an idea of what the message would be focused on. We'd plan all of our music around that as best as we could. From the gathering music, the prelude, Introit, Choir anthems, congregational hymns, special music, and traditional repeated pieces that are played for every Sunday. On our last in-house service, before Covid-19 would keep each of us in our own cocoons for a year, we met at our usual time. For Anna it was 7:45, for me 8:30. That last morning, the choir arrived in time to warm-up to sing through what had been prepared. The choir was small that Sunday, and so was the congregation.

As Monday rolled around there was a stream of emails and text messages from both Anna and Co. The three of us were trying to figure out rather quickly how we would put together a virtual service. As I had used an old mixing app on my laptop years ago, I did some google research and found it once again. I spent the next few nights relearning how it worked and how we might use it for the church services. We did a make-shift recording of everything that first week. It felt rushed, and it was rough around the edges, but I think we all felt like we had at least accomplished our first goal which was to continue with Sunday services without missing any. Co recorded his message and various parts to the service. Anna did the same. For hymns I played the piano and sang. It would be in the following weeks that we planned things earlier so that Anna would record them at her home, email or text her recordings to me and I'd sing along with her recording. I'd then use the music app to mix the two so that they sounded balanced. I felt back then that every week I was learning something new. Today it's a bit of a routine, but at the same time I feel like I'm still learning new little tricks and tools all of the time.

Now the Chancel Choir was something else entirely. During the first few weeks of virtual services, the choir would receive rather lengthy emails from me explaining how we might record our introits, hymns and anthems. I'd also attach mp3 files of a guide track that Anna and I put together. First, I'd have Anna record her piano accompaniment, she'd email it to me, I then would record a vocal part highlighted with it so that each choir member could practice on their own and I'd then email that to them. They would listen to the recording through headphones or earbuds at home, and then record their voice on a second device. They'd email me their vocal recording and I would then add it to the music file to be mixed with everything else. Sometimes an amusing moment would come up when someone's dog barked, or their phone would ring, AC would turn on, fire siren in background, or when someone would sing the wrong word. I needed a good laugh as the task could be quite tedious, working well past midnight to get things finished. The choir has been learning right along with Anna, Co, Debbie and me. They have all worked so hard and have been incredibly patient about every process that we've tried. I feel that for the most part I'd get my files to Co by Friday morning so that he could take the work that Anna, the choir, and myself had finished to be

inserted into a large compilation file that he would be able to put together to present to our virtual congregation. One added job that Co took on was to put video images and moving files to the music that Anna and I created. It's always an added benefit to the experience of feeling what the music is saying to us.

When fall arrived, I think I was a little surprised that we were still in a virtual situation. Normally we start choir rehearsals on the third Wednesday of August. Through the age of Covid, the Bell Choir found a way to work together each Monday night by having Ellen Alde setting most things up herself, and then putting each bell ringer at a safe distance from each other. They were able to continue to work this way throughout the entire Covid year. From time to time, they would record an anthem and it would be inserted into the service. For the Chancel Choir that wasn't an option. Vocals when speaking can be sent 3-4 feet away from the person speaking, but when we sing, it's been shown that a vocalist can put forth their air up to 30 feet. We were trying to figure out something to do. Then one day Anna showed me an app that they were trying at DePaul. This app is called Upbeat Music App. The idea was that it allowed for music groups to meet in a virtual room, and rehearse together. We could all see each other, hear each other, and also sing together to some extent. For me and the choir, this brought in a whole new level of confusion and learning, and many headaches and laughter too. We all needed to have either headphones or earbuds on so that each person's mic wasn't picking up their own speaker output of what everyone was saying or singing. Once we were in somewhat of a routine we began to record. This was a time of patience from everyone. I've never seen the choir so patient with each other as I have during this time. We managed to record two pieces for the Christmas Eve service. Each moment of contact, whether through a zoom session, an Upbeat Music App session, or one on one facetime session was like cool water on a very hot day. I have no idea how many hours combined I spent with people either on the phone or in a virtual room talking about the music, the app, or just life in general, but it was a lot. We all craved contact and this helped us to some extent.

Moving forward into spring we started zoom rehearsals again the second week of January. Only now we were doing sectionals as that seemed like a logical move. Each vocal part would meet together, we'd talk for a few minutes to say hello, then each singer would mute themselves and I'd play the piano on my end. When all vocal parts seemed to be ready to record, I'd send a link that they could copy and paste into their browser. It would take them to the site and specifically to that anthem's recording. I learned how to take each vocal track from the video and put it into another file. On average each track would take me anywhere from 20-30 minutes to do all of these things: I first line up their track to Anna's. Next, I mute Anna's track to listen for anything that needed adjusting. Once all tracks were finished, I then need to adjust the volumes so that all voices are heard as equally as possible. Once that is blended well, I save the file. I then move to another program on my laptop to combine the video and audio.

Whew!! So, if you thought our accompanist, Anna Kovalevska, and our choir director, Scott Emerick, had an "easy" year, hopefully you now understand the many EXTRA hours both of them put in, in order to have wonderful music in every church service for the last year. You may not comprehend all that Scott explained about how it was produced. I sure don't! From a choir member, it definitely has been a challenging year, but we sang an anthem on Palm Sunday, and get ready for this: the "Hallelujah Chorus" on Easter morning!

First Congregational United Church of Christ
766 Graceland Avenue, Des Plaines, Illinois

www.fccdp.org

847/299-5561

April 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4 Easter Communion 9:00am Worship 10:00am Fellowship	5 7:30p Wholly Ringers	6 Noon - Lunch Bunch	7 9:00a WWC 10:00a Bible Study	7:00p Maundy Thursday Worship: www.fccdp.org		
11 9:00am Worship 10:00am Fellowship 11:05am Ministry Staff	12 10:00a Drop-Offs 11:00a Creative Conversation 7:00p Finance 7:30p Wholly Ringers	13 12:00p Administrative Staff 7:00p Evening Circle	14 9:00a WWC 10:00a Bible Study 6:30p Music & Drama	15 7:00p Membership & Communications	16	17
18 9:00am Worship 10:00am Fellowship 11:05a Confirmation	19 6:30p Property 7:30p Wholly Ringers	20 Tidings Deadline Noon - Lunch Bunch	21 9:00a WWC 10:00a Bible Study 6:30p PRC	22 6:30p Chair Meeting	23	24 Rehder Baptism
25 9:00am Worship 10:00am Fellowship 11:05a Confirmation	26 10:00a Drop-Offs 7:30p Wholly Ringers	27 Noon - Lunch Bunch 7:00p Council	28 9:00a WWC 10:00a Bible Study	29 7:00p Worship Ministry	30	01